

SPRING 2023

# QUEEN'S ALUMNI REVIEW

THE MAGAZINE OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY SINCE 1927



# BLACK STUDIES

In Our Own Words

*Katherine*  
MCKITTRICK

*Dalitso*  
RUWE

*Joseph*  
KANGMENNAANG

*Kesha*  
FEVRIER

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Spring 2023



Stephanie Telesca, Artsci'09,  
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BY BLACK STUDIES FACULTY MEMBERS



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— JANET THE PLANET, P. 39

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Janet The Planet was like a kid in a candy factory. Literally.

↓  
**ABOUT THE COVER**

Faculty members of Black Studies were photographed in the 1923 Reading Room on the top floor of Douglas Library on Sept. 29, 2022.



We asked Toronto photographer Wade Hudson to capture faculty members of Black Studies in one of Queen's University's most iconic spaces. The final image, as well as the light-hearted composite image on page 19 and the portraits throughout, celebrates some of the many people who have built this program. It is one of the Alumni Review's only gatefold covers.

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## ACTIVE PARTNERS

**J**ust a few months ago, Black History and Futures Month at Queen's, as elsewhere, was devoted to honouring the history and contributions of Black Canadians and their communities. The new Black Studies program, which is profiled in this issue of the *Alumni Review*, played a key role in these events, as indeed it will in the ongoing transformation of our university as we work to realize the commitments Queen's made in November 2021 when it signed the *Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education*.

While it is justifiable cause for pride that Queen's was one of the earliest signatories to the *Charter*, that the university participated in the national conference out of which it came, and that members of our community continue to contribute to the Canada-wide dialogue which it initiated, the real test of our institution lies ahead. The *Charter* is unique in being addressed specifically and exclusively to the higher education sector, and in its profound understanding of the systemic and structural aspects of universities and colleges in which racism can manifest itself. If we are to be true to our commitment in signing, we will have to reflect upon, and where necessary change, those structures, policies, and processes which seem on the surface neutral, traditional, universal, and therefore beyond questioning.

The *Charter* focuses on four principles – “Black Flourishing, Inclusive Excellence, Mutuality, and Accountability” – and pursues them in governance, research, teaching and learning, and community engagement. All the principles are essential if institutions are to make progress in fostering Black inclusion,

but “mutuality” is especially worth reflecting upon if our university is to succeed in its commitment in the Strategic Framework to serve “an inclusive, diverse, and sustainable society.”

“Mutuality” still seems a slightly foreign concept in universities like ours, where an ethos of individualism continues to hold sway, where competition remains the fuel of achievement, and where action on climate and global sustainability has risen dramatically partly because universities are increasingly ranked on that basis. This is the paradoxical situation in which the universities of the developed world today find themselves: in competition to serve the greater good.

If we understand mutuality as it is defined in the *Charter* – including a recognition that “universities and colleges are embedded in communities locally, as well as nationally, regionally, and internationally” and that they should have an “interactive” relationship with those communities – it becomes obvious that the historical self-referentiality and self-sufficiency of the western academy must give way. To put this differently: the path forward for institutions like ours requires modesty and a greater willingness to be educated and shaped by the world beyond our confines.

In addressing ourselves to issues of anti-Black racism we must become active partners with the Black community both within and without the university. And the same ethic of interactive, reciprocal engagement must prevail in all our work, as the opportunities opened up by co-creation with the world we seek to serve will offer our greatest hope for the future.

PRINCIPAL PATRICK DEANE

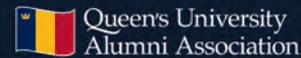
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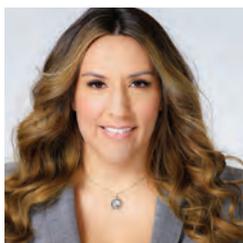
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**Wade Hudson** is a Toronto photographer inspired by the intricacy and expressiveness of the human face. A graduate of Humber College's photography program, he has worked with some of the top brands in the world, including The Body Shop, Samsung, Def Jam Island Recordings, New Balance, and Converse. His recent publications include features in *L'Équipe Magazine* and *Wired UK* in addition to numerous online publication contribu-

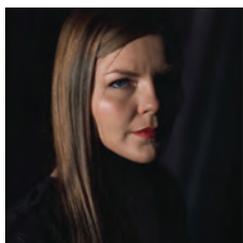
tions. Known for his striking portraiture (especially of individuals from Jamaica, where he was born and raised) and expertise in studio lighting, he says his work "is defined by an effortless and raw approach to investigating human emotion." See cover and "Tilling the Soil," on page 18.



**Candice Ward** is a sports, editorial, and commercial photographer who recently moved from Calgary to Las Vegas to shoot for the newest National Lacrosse League team, the Las Vegas Desert Dogs. In 2016, she was named to the Canadian Women & Sport list of Most Influential Women in Sport and Physical Activity. In 2018, she received an Aboriginal Role Model Award for Arts/Media and has also been featured in two Indigenous magazines as a role model for Indigenous youth. See, "How I Got Here," on page 44.



**Mia Barnes** is an L.A.-based director and photographer who specializes in music videos, artist photography, and commercials. She holds an undergraduate degree in photography from Ohio University's School of Visual Communication, where she built the foundations of her colourful and graphic work. As a freelancer, she has gone on to create projects for artists such as Camila Cabello, Ed Sheeran, Ciara, BTS, and Chris Martin. See "First Up," on page 39.



**Amber Bracken** is a freelance photojournalist and lifelong Albertan based in Edmonton. Her work has appeared in *National Geographic*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times* and she has been a two-time winner of the World Press Photo award. Her work explores intersections of race, environment, culture, and decolonization, with emphasis on the aftermath of residential schools. See "The Backstory," on page 40.



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TO US

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# QUEEN'S ALUMNI REVIEW

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# ON CAMPUS



The Carr-Harris Cup, featuring one of the nation's oldest hockey rivalries, finally returned after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19. The game between the Gaels and the Royal Military College of Canada's Paladins didn't disappoint, concluding with a thrilling 2-1 overtime win for the Gaels.

**What:** The Carr-Harris Cup **Where:** Leon's Centre **When:** Feb. 2, 2023

# CAMPUS NEWS



## [The Homecoming](#)

### Get ready to celebrate in October

Save the date! Queen's Homecoming 2023 will take place Oct. 20–22.

The weekend will be full of programming celebrating the moments that unite us – past, present, and future. All alumni are welcome to return to campus to celebrate. This is a milestone reunion year for graduating class years ending in 3 or 8.

Official events organized by the university will include open houses, faculty receptions, sporting events, and special receptions for alumni celebrating certain milestone reunions, such as the Tricolour Guard Reception and Dinner.

Online registration for Homecoming will open in the summer. For more information or for assistance with Homecoming plans, please contact the Alumni Office by email ([reunions@queensu.ca](mailto:reunions@queensu.ca)) or by calling 1-800-267-7837.

## [The Game](#)

### A strong finish to winter sports season

The winter sports season was as successful as the fall, with many Queen's student athletes performing and being recognized on the provincial and national stage. The Queen's Women's Basketball team had their best season in program history, Queen's Women's Squash

captured their 8th consecutive title, and Distance Track's Jude Wheeler-Dee captured the U SPORTS 1,000-metre gold medal.

It was a storybook season for both Queen's basketball teams, with the women finishing the regular season 21–1 and the men 19–5, both qualifying for the U SPORTS Final 8 Tournament. Queen's Women's Basketball Head Coach Claire Meadows (Artsci'07, Ed'09) and Men's Head Coach Steph Barrie were both recognized as OUA Coach of the Year, while Coach Barrie also picked up the U SPORTS Coach of the Year honours. Bridget Mulholland also received award recognition as the Tracy MacLeod Award recipient in both the OUA and U SPORTS. The award recognized determination, perseverance, and unwavering spirit. The women went on to secure a silver medal at the

▼  
The Gaels wrapped up the winter season with a strong finish in several sports, from basketball to squash.

U SPORTS Championship, completing their best season in program history.

The women's squash team continued their dominance, this time at home, winning their 8th consecutive OUA Championship. School of Medicine student athlete Maddie O'Connor was named MVP for the tournament.

Queen's Cross-Country and Distance Track student athlete Jude Wheeler-Dee continues to impress in only his second season with the Gaels. His season included breaking the Queen's Track 1,000-metre record, which had been intact for over 35 years. He ran the 1,000-metre in a time of 2:22:16 in January, beating the record previously set by Dave Mather in 1987. He went on to win the 1,000- and 1,500-metre titles at the OUA Championship and was named OUA Track MVP, then completed his season by winning the U SPORTS 1,000-metre gold medal, joining both Mr. Mather and Dr. Bob McCormack as Gaels to win both the OUA and U SPORTS gold in the event.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES PADDLE-GRANT; RENDERING BY STUDIO SANG COURTESY OF KPMB ARCHITECTS

### The Transformation

## Agnes construction set to begin next spring

The transformation of Agnes Etherington Art Centre is beginning to take shape.

The galleries are currently closed as more than 17,000 objects in Agnes’s collection are being packed and moved off site, and after a year of community engagement, two architectural renderings have been released, giving the Queen’s community its first look at a transformed art centre.

Agnes’s community-engaged design process continues through talking and sharing circles throughout 2023 as the team enters the design phase of the project. Construction is set to begin in spring 2024 and the new building to open in 2026. When it opens, Agnes will emerge as the largest public university-affiliated museum in

▶ Exterior composition for Agnes Reimagined shows the new curvilinear addition and how it merges with the heritage Etherington House (right).



this country and a champion of museological change where Indigenous and western world views sit side by side as equals.

Agnes Reimagined would not be possible without the leadership and philanthropic support of the late Alfred Bader, BSc’45, BA’46, MSc’47, LLD’86; Isabel Bader, LLD’07; and Bader Philanthropies, Inc., who are longtime supporters of Queen’s and the arts.

### The Partnership

## Queen’s Health Sciences helps transform health care in northeastern Ontario

The Weeneebayko Area Health Authority (WAHA), Queen’s, and the Mastercard Foundation are partnering to transform health care in northeastern Ontario and to expand education and employment opportunities for Indigenous youth by creating the Queen’s Weeneebayko Health Education Program.

WAHA and Queen’s Health Sciences will co-develop a university curriculum for health professions

training in the western James Bay region. The program will prepare Indigenous students for careers in medicine, nursing, midwifery, and other health professions through culturally informed education. Programming and resources will also be created to enable local youth to envision, pursue, and succeed in health-professions training right from high school.

“This is a very important initiative for the Weeneebayko Region that will help increase the capacity for culturally safe health care that is directed and delivered by health professionals from our communities,” says Lynne Innes, President and Chief Executive Officer, Weeneebayko Area Health Authority. “It is exciting to work together on this new approach that will support Indigenous youth as they pursue health-care careers and build a stronger, healthier future for the communities we serve.”

The vision is to establish a new training site in Moosonee that will serve coastal community sites. The training programs will help build comprehensive, sustainable, community-centred health care – improving patient outcomes and addressing gaps in delivery.

The Mastercard Foundation committed more than \$31 million to support this partnership.





◀ The Lang Pavilion at Richardson Stadium on Queen's west campus is scheduled for completion this summer

The Gift

**\$30 million from Bruce Mitchell will strengthen research, support graduate student recruitment**

Bruce Mitchell, Sc'68, DSc'20, is helping Queen's bolster research to make groundbreaking discoveries that will deepen our knowledge of people, the planet, and the universe.

The business leader and philanthropist made a transformative gift of \$30 million to his alma mater with the goal of increasing research intensity and supporting graduate student recruitment.

"The Queen's community is grateful for Bruce's generosity and his commitment to research," says Principal and Vice-Chancellor Patrick Deane. "This generous gift provides us with the resources to help achieve our bold research goals, in part through the support of top researchers. With these additional funds, we are realizing our aspirations to become a world leader, bringing scholars and innovators together to make improvements across our many fields of study."

The gift further strengthens research at Queen's. The university is already home to 35 Canada Research Chairs, 99 Royal Society

of Canada members, and a Nobel Laureate – Professor Emeritus Arthur B. McDonald, co-recipient of the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physics.

"The best way to invest in research is to invest in people and create the optimal conditions for them to thrive," says Vice-Principal (Research) Nancy Ross, Artsci'90, MA'92. "This gift allows us to focus on attracting and retaining the best faculty and graduate students. We hope to recruit rising stars and nurture them, setting up research environments where researchers are supported and able to progress."

The Pavilion

**Stadium construction on track for summer**

The construction of the Lang Pavilion at Richardson Stadium is on track to be completed in July.

The redevelopment of Richardson Stadium, with a first phase initiated in 2014, has been fully funded through philanthropic commitments from donors.

Once complete, the stadium will fully enclose the field, allowing access to the east and west stands, and the new design will allow users to circumnavigate the full stadium at the concourse level.

The Lang Pavilion will enhance the training and competition environment for varsity sports, expand opportunities for varsity and recreation activities, and make usage more gender inclusive.

A formal opening for Lang Pavilion is planned for the fall.

The Professorship

**\$2.5-million gift for environmental, social, and governance teaching at Smith School of Business**

Mike Quinn, BCom'88, and Francisca Quinn have made a \$2.5-million gift through The Quinn Family Future Foundation to Smith School of Business to establish the Quinn Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Professorship.

The Quinns believe it is critical for the next generation of business leaders to understand climate change and sustainable development concepts, and the professorship will weave sustainability throughout Smith's programs.

"Climate change and social issues are not only significant threats to Canadian business, they can also be tremendous opportunities for organizations and entrepreneurs," says Francisca Quinn. "We want to equip every student at Smith to expertly navigate ESG – whether in business strategy, accounting, finance, technology, or organizational systems."

Sustainability is already a key strategic goal at Queen's. The university is committed to furthering the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Queen's was recently ranked in the top 10 of the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact rankings, which measured the actions of more than 1,500 post-secondary institutions that are trying to advance the UN's SDGs.

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# Tricolour hat trick

A cache of hats reveals the history of Queen's

BY JORDAN WHITEHOUSE

**J**ust inside the west wing door of Summerhill is an office much like any other. There are a couple of desks with computers, a big photocopier, filing cabinets. But look behind one of those desks and you'll find a glass display case that doubles as a window into Queen's wearable past. Inside the case, neatly arranged on three shelves, are seven hats – each donated by alumni or their families. A couple are the familiar tams handed to every frosh in the fall, but there are also Sc'23 and Sc'24 beanies, a tricolour tuque, and a red, blue, and gold cap you can imagine being worn at a mid-20th-century football game.

As interesting as each chapeau is on its own, when taken together they're also a symbol of Queen's clothing tradition and how it has evolved along with the university, says former Queen's historian Duncan McDowall.

"Queen's wouldn't have survived if it clung to old traditions that didn't move with the times, and so one of the things that strikes me as a historian is the persistence of modified tradition at Queen's – and you can see that in the stories behind some of this clothing."

Take the tam, which has been handed out to new Queen's students for nearly a century. When the Queen's tam was first introduced, the Alma Mater Society required that freshmen wear it at all times while in Kingston until Dec. 1 (Sundays optional). By the 1980s, earning your Artsci tam required a queasier style of militancy: fondling fish heads or covering yourself in cat food in the basement of Jeffery Hall. But by the end of the decade, as hazing fell out of style, innocent trivia contests replaced gross gauntlets as the means to getting your tam. Today, tams are simply given to frosh – another sign of the evolution of a Queen's tradition: from aggressive initiations to more welcoming orientations. 🍷





## Colours

In 1884, the president of the Alma Mater Society and the captains of the university's football and soccer teams select Queen's official colours - red, blue, and gold - the main colours of the university's coat of arms.

## Tams

In the fall of 1926 the Alma Mater Society introduces the tam. Once used to indicate the clan of 15th-century Scottish warriors, the tam at Queen's is used to identify one's faculty. A red tassel on a tam signals arts, yellow science, and blue medicine.

## Pompoms

Nine different coloured pompoms sit atop Queen's tams today, each representing a particular discipline.

- Applied Science:** gold
- Arts and Science:** red
- Commerce:** maroon
- Computer Science:** purple and gold
- Concurrent Education:** light blue and red
- Law:** grey
- Medicine:** navy
- Nursing:** white
- Physical Education:** light blue and gold

With two decades of success and a musical legacy that now spans generations, Splash’N Boots reflect on their early days at Queen’s and their meteoric rise to the top of the children’s music scene.



Taes Leavitt (Artsci’04) and Nick Adams (Artsci’04 and Ed’05) turned a class project into a career. Twenty years after leaving Queen’s, the musical duo Splash’N Boots has two Juno Awards from seven nominations (including a 2023 nomination for their latest album, *I Am Love*), 14 albums, four DVDs, and a television show on Treehouse. From humble beginnings on Kingston’s street corners, they’ve toured globally – from the Arctic to Australia – always with the same goal of encouraging parents and children to enjoy music together. Watch for them on tour this summer in various Canadian cities.

**You turned a Queen’s University class project into a career. How?**

**LEAVITT:** Our class project was to put on a performance in Kingston and we put on a play at the Kingston Public Library. The play had a couple songs in it. At the end, we thought it was so fun, but we really just liked the music part so we started doing singing gigs. Our first was on the street corner as part of the buskers’ festival with between two and five people in the audience.

**ADAMS:** The important part was we were hired through Queen’s University for their summer work employment program. Through the drama department, they set up a group called the Barefoot Players and we were hired for two summers. Our job was to create and perform children’s entertainment around Kingston. That gave us insight on how to book a show, build a show. We got work experience that showed us we could take Splash’N Boots and make it a full-time job.

**LEAVITT:** If we hadn’t had that, we probably wouldn’t be doing this. I remember the audition process was tough because everybody wanted this job. It was just a perfect way to learn about what we actually wanted to do and we got paid to do it. It was such a magical Queen’s program.

**How did you come to be interested in performing for kids?**

**ADAMS:** Taes is more classically trained and I was in a couple of bands at Queen’s and we were both in Queen’s Players as well. We both just had a love of performing for children and families. It just felt so natural.

**Speaking of love, you were a couple, correct?**

**LEAVITT:** Yeah, we got married while we were at Queen’s. And we realized that actually, being business partners and best friends was better. Our calling was to be Splash’N Boots.

**ADAMS:** So, now we both have partners and we’re one big, giant, happy family.

**You’ve performed all over the world. Can you share a memory of how you’ve reached children and their parents?**

**ADAMS:** We did a big theatre show in Toronto and we were singing a song called “Bumblebee.” We have a lot of children with special abilities and families who come to our shows and we often give the kids the mic. In this instance, one girl was nonverbal. When Taes gave her the mic, she ended up singing a whole two sentences and her grandpa was





crying and everyone started bawling. We get to create moments like that.

**LEAVITT:** It was really beautiful. And that story sums up so much. It's always about the children and those little moments. It's not for the accolades.

**Why is it important for Canadian children to grow up with Canadian content?**

**ADAMS:** I think it's really important [to show kids] that you can be Canadian and do whatever you want to. I think it's important culturally.

**LEAVITT:** And just to keep this sort of history of Canadian music going is really nice. We have such a rich history of genuine performers who really touch your heart. It's nice to be part of that.

**What has been the key to your success?**

**LEAVITT:** We were very naive when we started doing this. We just said, we're doing this and we're going to get a television show and this is going to be our full-time job and nobody's going to stop us. We just worked so hard and never considered that it wasn't going to happen.

On purpose, we never had a backup plan. I remember saying, 'We can either get side jobs or we can be poor, and commit all of our time to building this business. We can suck it up and eat peanut butter and banana sandwiches for the next couple years. We really did eat a lot of those sandwiches.'

**ADAMS:** We just had a vision board. We cut out a [picture of a] TV and put it on it.

**What are your plans for the coming years?**

**LEAVITT:** In 2023, we'll be back to performing without COVID [precautions] and we have a new album, so we'll see where that takes us; 2023 is also our 20th year, so it's nostalgic.

**How important has Queen's been for your careers?**

**ADAMS:** It was a great place for us to begin. The Queen's drama department was important and Kingston was the perfect size – large enough to support acts like ours, and it's also an artist community. It seemed like the perfect breeding ground for this kind of art. Kingston gave us a chance to grow and fail.

**– Jennifer Campbell**

# When the time comes

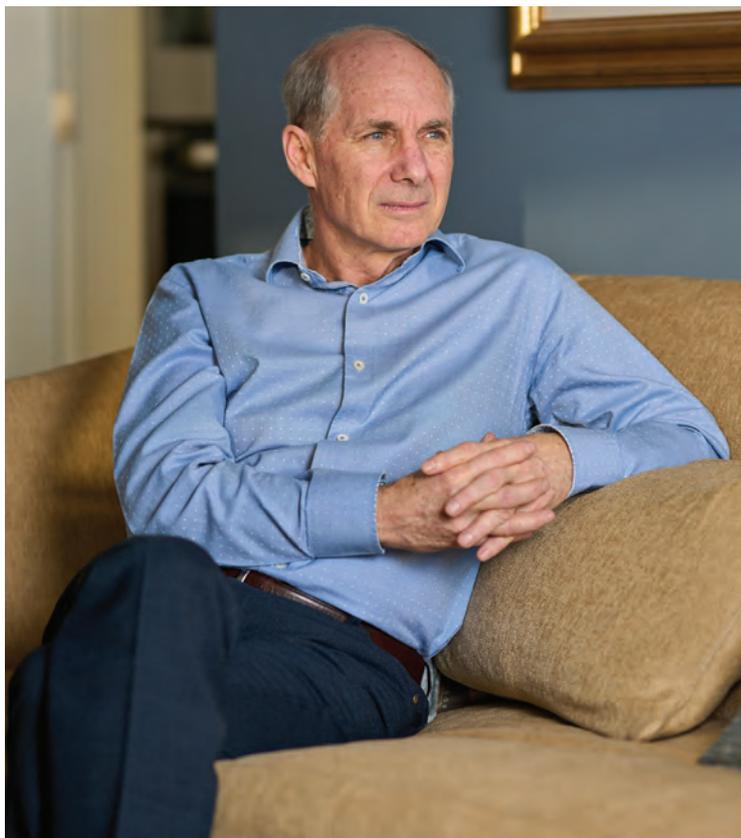
'GORDON'S CAME IN, ASSESSED THE SITUATION, ADVISED ME WHAT NEEDED TO BE DONE, AND THEN TOOK CARE OF EVERYTHING'

When Stephen Vanner's mother passed away in Kingston, he knew precisely which company could best assist him in his role as executor of her estate. Stephen turned to the team at Gordon's Downsizing and Estate Services, a family business that serves seniors, executors and powers of attorney across Ontario. Gordon's, which has been in business for over six decades, offers bundled services specifically for executors and downsizers. After moving clients to new homes, they secure, manage, appraise, and sell both the real estate and personal property while providing interim funding of all expenses so that clients can move forward with ease (payment is made upon closing of the real estate).

Both Stephen and his wife were unprepared to deal with the time-consuming and emotionally draining business of winding up an estate entirely on their own. For them, and for family members elsewhere in the country, knowing they could trust someone to come in and handle it capably and sensitively was a tremendous help.

"My sister lives in Saskatchewan and my brother is out of town, too, and they were pleased to know that the work of managing the estate wasn't falling entirely to me. There was this ripple effect of relief through the family, which is another way the process worked in our favour."

Stephen, who earned his MD at Queen's University and today is a professor at the University and director of the school's Translational Institute of Medicine



and Gastrointestinal Diseases Research Unit, was determined not to try to do everything piecemeal. He had watched his father downsize a few years earlier, going through the process of moving himself and selling off a lifetime of acquisitions on Kijiji.

"It was agonizing for him," Stephen says. "I don't think he was prepared for the emotional pain of seeing items he valued over the years go for next to nothing, or dealing with people who don't show up at the appointed time, or try to lowball you. Eventually he was overwhelmed by this, and it fell to the family to help him complete the process."

In contrast, when Gordon's was contracted to handle the disposition of his mother's estate, the company team managed preparations for the sale of the property, taking care of the necessary inspections, repairs – a back fence required work – and cleaning. Because it was winter, they arranged for the driveway and walkway to be kept clear. When asked, Gordon's provided the names of estate lawyers who could work with him.

Communications from company representatives were always timely and clear, Stephen says, and people from Gordon's were quick to respond to questions from the family. Once the Vanners had selected and removed what they wanted to retain, the estate auction was quickly organized and completed.

"The whole process was like a gift to us," Stephen says. "It was a completely positive experience from the get-go. They came in, assessed the situation, advised me what needed to be done, and then took care of everything. We were dealing with various people in the organization and no matter who was involved, they were a joy to work with. They clearly shared the same company culture and spirit. Whether it was on the real estate side or the auction side or any other, they were all great."

Gordon's has earned the trust and gratitude of thousands of clients through its 60 years in business.

"We take pride in offering our clients a seamless package of downsizing and estate services," says Adam Gordon, President of Gordon's Downsizing and Estate Services and a proud graduate of Queen's University. "Our staff is knowledgeable and experienced and provide a predictable experience at a fair cost."

Stephen says that in the wake of his work with the company, he has no hesitation recommending Gordon's services.

"I've told all my friends what a wonderful experience it was," he says. "Most important, I told my kids when our time comes, call Gordon's!"



BLACK STUDIES FACULTY IN THE 1923 READING ROOM - AN ARTISTIC CHOICE TO MIX OLD AND NEW, SYMBOLIC OF THE UNIVERSITY'S PATH TO THE FUTURE.



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# As Black Studies

celebrates its one-year anniversary, we invite readers to take a seat at the table with some of the many people who helped bring the department to life – and continue to help it flourish – as well as important allies of the program, such as Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Rather than a story, we asked these trailblazers to tell us, in their own words, about their connections to this interdisciplinary program that blends art with activism, geography with global health, politics with poetry, and religion with race.

What is Black Studies? What does it mean to those who teach it? And where is it going?

Their answers tell a story of social change, collaboration, and tenacity – but also a story of passion for their work, that they now see reflected in the faces of their students. They talk of a place that values scholarship, that is forging new solidarities with Indigenous communities, and that celebrates the intellectual depth of their collective.

At the most fundamental level, it is a place where, as Dr. Juliane Okot Bitek notes, people can be themselves. But it is also a place where people are part of an ongoing dialogue about how Black Studies can have an impact on our community, our country, and our world.

This is part of that conversation.





## The long work of Black Studies at Queen's

### [Barrington Walker](#)

Barrington Walker is a Professor in the Department of History at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont., and is its Associate Vice-President, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. From 2001-19, Dr. Walker was a member of the faculty at Queen's, specializing in Black Canadian History and histories of race, immigration, and the law. Dr. Walker was the first Black person to earn tenure in the Queen's Department of History.

**I was hired** as an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Queen's University in 2001 to teach and research modern Canadian history with an emphasis on law, immigration, "race," and Black Canadian history. The courses I taught in Black Canadian history (and Black North American history) came at a difficult point in time in the Canadian academy. Black history and studies were not widely taught at Canadian universities. The infrastructure for these sorts of offerings was slim; there were few

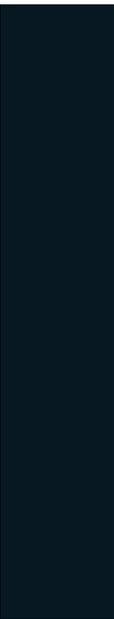
**"THE FIRST DAY THAT I STOOD BEFORE MY SEMINAR ON 'THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN CANADA,' I REALIZED, TO MY SHOCK, THAT I WAS THE ONLY BLACK PERSON IN THE ROOM."**

Barrington Walker

tenure-track and tenured positions, few endowed chairs, and no departments, programs, or concentrations in the country. Amid this rather bleak landscape, I encountered a university at Queen's that had little in the way of diversity among the ranks of students, faculty, and senior administrators, and even less in the way of Blackness and Black people. Initially, I had doubts about whether I could successfully teach histories of Blackness in a place that was marked by what a well-known study of Queen's during that time dubbed a "culture of whiteness." Indeed, the first day that I stood before my seminar on "The Black Experience in Canada," I realized, to my shock, that I was the only Black person in the room. As it turned out, most of the students were curious, respectful, and hardworking, and the majority of my new colleagues were welcoming; Queen's became a place where studying Blackness in Canada was possible. It is gratifying to know that I had a part in tilling the soil for the program that has blossomed today.

### **Katherine McKittrick**

Katherine McKittrick is Professor in the Department of Gender Studies and the Canada Research Chair in Black Studies. Dr. McKittrick's research has explored the methodologies, citational practices, and theoretical frameworks used by Black scholars, and examined



**“MY STUDENTS DREW AND CONTINUE TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE URGENCY OF STUDYING BLACK STUDIES, AS IT RELATES TO ORGANIZING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SUPPORTING EACH OTHER IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY LIVES.”**

**Katherine McKittrick**

how narratives of imprecision and relationality interrupt knowledge systems that seek to observe, index, know, and discipline Blackness.

**It goes without** saying that Black Studies was a dream project emerging from the research, writing, and activism of undergraduate and graduate students at Queen's University. While there has been incredible encouragement and work done by faculty and staff – Barrington Walker, Kristin Moriah, Beverley Mullings, Stephanie Simpson, Alana Butler – my students drew and continue to draw attention to the urgency of studying Black Studies, as it relates to organizing for social

justice and supporting each other in our day-to-day lives. When I began teaching at Queen's in 2004, it was the curiosity and brilliance of these students, who brought into focus the difficult but beautiful politics and pedagogies of Black Studies: to share ideas about how to navigate racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression; to read and study scholarship that is focused on liberation for Black and non-Black people; to build and deepen solidarities with Indigenous communities; to demand that we collectively understand the university not as a site where Black communities are evidence of diversity, but as institutions that provide the conditions to hold space, formal or informal or secreted or momentary, for imagining better futures. The students – Jasmine Abdelhadi, Aruna Boodram, Leeza James, Darcel Bullen, Grace Adeniyi-Ogunyankin, Milka Njoroge, Melissa D'Souza, Akilah

*Katherine McKittrick  
Professor, Department  
of Gender Studies  
Canada Research Chair  
in Black Studies  
→*





Beckles, Kavita Bissoondial, Yasmine Djerbal, Carla Moore, Bianca Beauchemin, Danyel Haughton, Yaniya Lee, Muna Dahir, Amanda Lyn, Kendall Witaszek, Celine Gibbons-Taylor, Elliot Jun, Kara Melton, Taylor Cenac, Laura Kwak, Sali Lafrenie and more – quietly contributed to what we now call the Minor in Black Studies, offering clues, stories, conversations, and theories that centre and generate care, collaboration, and social change. Listing their names is not simply an act of gratitude. It is an active acknowledgement of a population at Queen’s that is so often erased, yet who have done meaningful work altering campus life through activism and scholarship.

#### [Kristin Moriah](#)

Kristin Moriah is an Assistant Professor of English at Queen’s University and Satellite Fellow at the Pennsylvania State University Center for Black Digital Research. Dr. Moriah is the 2022 recipient of the American Studies Association’s Yasuo Sakakibara Prize, which honours the best paper presented by an international scholar at the organization’s annual meeting. Dr. Moriah’s research interests include Sound Studies and Black feminist performance, particularly the circulation of African American performance within the Black diaspora and its influence on the formation of national identity.

Daniel McNeil  
Professor, Department of  
Gender Studies  
Queen’s National Scholar  
Chair in Black Studies  
←

**I am an** Assistant Professor, and I began working at Queen’s in 2018. I moved back to Canada from the U.S. to take up my new role. When I started looking at graduate programs so that I could study Black literature and culture at an advanced level, it felt like there were very few options in Canada. It seemed as if, in comparison to the U.S., very few university researchers here shared those interests or were in positions where they could supervise and guide my work. It made sense for me to enroll in a PhD program in the United States at that time because it felt like that was where work in Black literature was most strongly supported. I think that dynamic has changed dramatically. We have such a strong contingent of Canadian and international scholars and students working in the field of Black Studies at Queen’s. We have recruited a truly outstanding group of faculty members and students. It is amazing to see how far we’ve come in terms of recruiting Black faculty and supporting research in Black Studies the past few years. And it has been such a pleasure to do this work as part of a collective. There is strength in numbers. I think this is one of the most exciting places in Canada to pursue research in the field of Black Studies right now.

**“IT HAS BEEN SUCH  
A PLEASURE TO DO  
THIS WORK AS PART  
OF A COLLECTIVE.  
THERE IS STRENGTH  
IN NUMBERS.”**

**Kristin Moriah**

#### **Black Studies is...**

#### [Daniel McNeil](#)

Daniel McNeil is a Professor in the Department of Gender Studies and the Queen’s National Scholar Chair in Black Studies. His award-winning teaching and research explore key themes and issues in Black Atlantic Studies and multiculturalism. In 2022-23, he received the inaugural Editor’s Award from the *Canadian Journal of Communication*, published *Thinking While Black: Translating the Politics and Popular Culture of a Rebel Generation*, and co-produced and co-hosted the first season of the Black Studies Podcast.

**Throughout 2022-23**, the Black Studies program hosted a series of screenings, conversations, and celebrations to mark the launch of the new interdisciplinary program. At the launch events at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre on Oct. 21 and 22 – which carefully and creatively conveyed the efforts of Black faculty, staff, students, and community members to imagine and build Black Studies – we were fortunate to learn from generations of students at Queen’s. One conversation with an alum was particularly memorable.

On the one hand, the alum generously shared that they were inspired by the possibilities of a Black Studies program. They welcomed the representations of Black life, livingness, and culture in the Black Studies graphic element designed by the award-winning South African-based design studio Mam’gobozi, which worked in collaboration with Alyssa

Vernon (Queen's, ConEd'22) and the Black Studies program group. They found the artwork conveying collective joy and collective struggle that the South African artist Pola Maneli developed for the Black Studies program to be incredibly compelling. They also valued the short narrative film *Black Studies Is...*, which was conceived by the Black Studies program group and produced by Katherine McKittrick, and featured anti-racist activists, artists, and intellectuals from around the world responding to the prompt, *Black Studies Is...* On the other hand, the alum also provided an important reminder that community members can feel somewhat deflated and alienated when they hear the names of scholars and theorists in Black Studies that they don't know.

This ambivalent reaction resonated with me, and it continues to guide and inform collaborations with scholars, artists, and activists to develop projects and initiatives – such as the Black Studies podcast and Black Histories and Futures Month reading lists and playlists – that communicate the complexities and nuances of global Black communities to local and translocal audiences with imagination and sensitivity.



### [Juliane Okot Bitek](#)

Juliane Okot Bitek is a poet-scholar, and an Assistant Professor of Black Creative Writing and Cultural Production. Some of the themes in Dr. Okot Bitek's writing have included war and trauma, history and cultural memory, and Black and Indigenous cultural relations. Her 2016 collection of poetry, *100 Days*, considered how to remember the 1994 Rwanda genocide. The collection earned Dr. Okot Bitek the 2017 Glenna Luschei Prize for African Poetry and the INDIEFAB Book of the Year (Poetry) Award.

**For me, Black Studies** offers a space for us to think seriously and critically about Blackness and Black people in relation to creativity, world-making, and resistance. Given the abundant collection of brilliance of my colleagues in Black Studies, I will limit my comments to Black Studies in my practice. As an African-born person living in the diaspora, my Black Studies is global, and it encompasses histories, cultures, and practices of Black people beyond the American and Canadian contexts. Introducing my students

to writers, thinkers, and doers from a global Black world to open up myriad ways of being in the world is very exciting to me. Black Studies at Queen's offers an intellectual and artistic home, where I can be myself.

### [Kesha Fevrier](#)

Kesha Fevrier is an Assistant Professor and Queen's National Scholar in the Department of Geography and Planning. Dr. Fevrier's research centres on the everyday lived experiences of marginalized groups in the global South. One of Dr. Fevrier's recent research projects examined electronic waste recycling in Ghana and demonstrated how the politics of race and ethnicity coalesce to inform the value of space, and shape racial and ethnic geographies there.

**My Caribbean roots** demand nothing less than a global approach to Black Studies that attends to our shared histories, lived realities, collective futures, and aspirations of freedom. Teaching under the umbrella of Black Studies, whether Black Ecologies, or Black Environmentalism, is an opportunity to pursue urgent questions about the universal precarity of Black life, but also the many ways that Black people – inside and outside major diaspora locations – and their intellectual and cultural traditions resist, transform, and thrive in spite of it all. My Black Studies is decolonial, and expansively inclusive. It's global.

**“AS AN AFRICAN-BORN PERSON LIVING IN THE DIASPORA, MY BLACK STUDIES IS GLOBAL, AND IT ENCOMPASSES HISTORIES, CULTURES, AND PRACTICES OF BLACK PEOPLE BEYOND THE AMERICAN AND CANADIAN CONTEXTS.”**

Juliane Okot Bitek

Juliane Okot Bitek  
Assistant Professor of  
Black Creative Writing  
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## How does Black Studies attend to community?

### [Jennifer Leath and Joseph Kangmennaang](#)

Jennifer S. Leath is an Assistant Professor in Black Religion and Queen's National Scholar. Dr. Leath's research focuses on the intersection of sexualities and religions in sacred communities and spaces of African Diaspora. Dr. Leath's research and teaching interests also include the physics of metaphysics of womanism, the intersections of Buddhist and womanist thought, interdisciplinary approaches to interreligious dialogue, and theories of justice.

Joseph Kangmennaang is an Assistant Professor in the School of Kinesiology and Health Studies, and Queen's National Scholar in Black Health and Social Change. Dr. Kangmennaang is a health geographer whose research focuses on health inequalities, immigrant health, and non-communicable disease control and prevention. Dr. Kangmennaang promotes the well-being of marginalized communities through scholarship on how Black immigrants live, work, and play.

“[THE 2022-23 BLACK STUDIES SPEAKER SERIES THEME OF BLACK QUEER RELIGIONS] ILLUMINATES THE INTERSECTIONS OF BLACKNESS, WOMANISM, QUEERNESS, QUARE(NESS), AND RELIGION.”

Jennifer Leath and Joseph Kangmennaang

*Reading While Black* is an opportunity for Black Studies faculty and students to explore discourses in Black Studies through texts engaged in common. In our first meeting of the year, we discussed M. Jacqui Alexander's *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*. Through these *Reading While Black* convenings, we hope to develop our research, writing, pedagogical, and community-building approaches to Black Studies.

The 2022-23 Black Studies speaker series theme of Black Queer Religions evaluates the possibilities of “quare” discourses and praxes. This speaker series illuminates the intersections of Blackness, womanism, queerness, quare(ness), and religion. Consisting of four panel discussions (Black Queer Buddhisms, Black Queer Christianities, Black Queer Islams, and

Black Queer Indigeneities and New Religious Movements), this speaker series presents voices of leading scholars working at these intersections, while also providing opportunities for community members from Queen's University, Kingston, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa to engage in public conversations about the complexities that underpin identity, identification, and religion.

### [Dalitso Ruwe and Vanessa Thompson](#)

Dalitso Ruwe is an Assistant Professor of Black Political Thought with the Department of Philosophy. Dr. Ruwe's research interests include the intellectual history of Africana philosophy, anti-colonial theory, Africana legal history, Black male studies, and Black philosophies of education. Dr. Ruwe completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Guelph in 2020-21, where his research focused on the Black Abolitionists debates on American slavery that emerged from the National Negro Conventions of 1830-64, and the role that the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and migration to Canada afforded to Black thinkers' development of socio-political and legal critiques of American Slavery.

Joseph Kangmennaang  
Assistant Professor, School of  
Kinesiology and Health Studies  
Queen's National Scholar in  
Black Health and Social Change  
→



Vanessa Thompson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Gender Studies, and Distinguished Professor of Black Studies and Social Justice.

Dr. Thompson's work is rooted in traditions of activist scholarship, anti-colonial theories and Black feminist methodologies. She collaborates with Black and anti-racist movements that are engaged in abolitionist struggles and transformations. Some of Dr. Thompson's recent research has focused on how Black urban activist movements challenge French Republican state racism, transnational and transatlantic abolitionist practices, and imaginaries in the Black diaspora.

**Teaching While Black** workshops at Queen's are spaces for faculty and pre-doctoral and post-doctoral students to reflect on our commitment, principles, values, and journeys as educators to develop and disseminate critical knowledge about and in collaboration with global Black communities. In our workshops, we have exchanged ideas about interdisciplinary teaching and how to support mutual learning between students at Queen's and local and global Black communities. We have also discussed "Decolonizing the University" with student activists from South Africa in conjunction with ongoing reflections about public scholarship and community engagement.





## **Black Studies, Community, and Art**

### [Emelie Chhangur and Qanita Lilla](#)

Artist, curator and writer Emelie Chhangur is the Director and Curator of Agnes Etherington Art Centre, where Curator and writer Qanita Lilla is the Associate Curator, Arts of Africa.

**Agnes Etherington Art** Centre is in the process of transformation and change. We take seriously Queen's new strategic framework and its calls to action, acknowledging that

**“IN OUR WORKSHOPS, WE HAVE EXCHANGED IDEAS ABOUT INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING AND HOW TO SUPPORT MUTUAL LEARNING BETWEEN STUDENTS AT QUEEN'S AND LOCAL AND GLOBAL BLACK COMMUNITIES.”**

**Dalitso Ruwe and Vanessa Thompson**

Vanessa Thompson  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of Gender Studies  
Distinguished Professor of Black  
Studies and Social Justice  
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the institution, not communities, needs to change. As an ally, Agnes is active and engaged; as a public, university-affiliated art institution, we propel the cultural transformations characterizing contemporaneity.

To expect community to care about Agnes, we must reverse engrained engagement strategies by asking instead: How does Agnes attend to community? We question what an art centre centres by de-centring

ourselves. We turn our institutional positionality toward social justice. Over the past year, we've made significant strides in this direction: all purchased art directly supported BIPOC artists; exhibitions and public programs featured 90 per cent QTBIPOC artists; and we changed gallery practices by establishing polyvocal policies.

This summer, our Brown Butter house party and solstice celebrations featured collaborations between Black artists and chefs. We brought the streets to the gallery by graffitifying our façades!

Now we're working through community-engaged design processes for Agnes Reimagined, taking advantage of unprecedented opportunities to rethink museum practices by building alternative architectures to restructure them, ensuring our new building won't be a container for old systems but a proposition for new possibilities.

Agnes's 2022 exhibitions caringly carry forward the past while simultaneously speculating new futures, nurturing creative sustenance beyond colonial frameworks. From Collections Count + Care, which reflects on our responsibility of homing collections, to Land Protectors, which honours Indigenous artists/activists on Turtle Island who steadfastly safeguard survivance, to Fugitive Rituals, that invited artists to imagine alternative institutional systems, to embodying energies of Black futurities exemplified by artists Pamela Matharu, Winsom Winsom, Camille Turner, and Sandra Brewster, we model forms of history as forums for recognition, resilience, and radical love through counter-archival impulses, intergenerational connections, and feminist genealogies that cite what came before. 🙌

# TWIST OF FATE



BY  
CARLY  
WEEKS



ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
KELSEY DAVIS

What are the odds that a genetic counsellor would have a child with the rarest of rare genetic disorders? Stephanie Telesca found out – and decided to do something about it.

**AS A GENETIC COUNSELLOR IN THE** prenatal diagnosis department at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital, Stephanie Telesca spends her days with the rarest of the rare. The ones in a million. The prospective parents who agonize over devastating news and life-altering decisions instead of selecting gifts for registries and preparing for baby showers. The ones who are left to cry and grieve what will never be instead of sharing photos of sleepy, swaddled newborns on social media.

It's a job Ms. Telesca, Artsci'09, cares deeply about. But being exposed to traumatic, heartbreaking situations on a regular basis made her question whether she could bear the uncertainty that comes with the decision to start a family. In the end, the logical side – the one telling her that most pregnancies have happy endings – won, even if she couldn't shake the worried feeling in the pit of her stomach. So, she and her husband, Christopher Espana, decided to take the leap.

Always a planner, Ms. Telesca was determined that she and Mr. Espana would undergo every available screening test before and during pregnancy. Everything looked great and they welcomed a baby girl, Eliana, on Feb. 27, 2021.

They had no way of knowing that Ms. Telesca's worst fears – having a child with a severe disability and being given no warning or time to prepare – had come true. Within weeks of the birth, Ms. Telesca began to suspect something was

"EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE IS DIFFICULT," SAYS MS. TELESKA... BUT IN THE MIDST OF HER STRUGGLE AND HEARTBREAK, [SHE] HAS ALSO FOUND A NEW PURPOSE: FIGHTING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR ELIANA.

amiss: Eliana always seemed to be crying and in pain, never made eye contact, and failed to reach other early developmental milestones.

A few months before her first birthday, Eliana was diagnosed with KCNC1-related developmental and epileptic encephalopathy (DEE), a potassium channel disorder that can cause intellectual and developmental delays, seizures and movement disorders, vision problems, and low muscle tone.

A cruel twist of fate – a chance mutation on Eliana's KCNC1 gene, which plays a pivotal role in communication between brain cells – had erased the future they had been waiting for and robbed Eliana of the life she deserved. It's a condition so rare that it couldn't have been detected on any prenatal genetic test. There were so few cases – only a handful are known – that Ms. Telesca and Mr. Espana struggled even to find information about KCNC1-related DEE after Eliana's diagnosis.

Now, at two years old, Eliana can't hold her head up, feed herself, or speak. She smiles when she hears her mother's voice – but she will never look into her mother's eyes, or stumble clumsily as she masters her first steps. While other children her age are busy emptying kitchen cupboards, learning new words, and exploring their world, Eliana remains, in many ways, an infant. She can't ever be left unsupervised and



FAMILY PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEPHANIE TELESKA





is largely immobile. And, as she gets older, it's becoming harder to provide basic care for her. For instance, bath time is a struggle, as Eliana's low muscle tone and inability to hold herself up make it hard for her parents to safely lift her in and out of the tub.

"Every aspect of life is difficult," says Ms. Telesca, who lives in Toronto. "It's hard to say exactly how difficult it is."

But in the midst of her struggle and heartbreak, Ms. Telesca has also found a new purpose: fighting for a brighter future for Eliana. And that means using her knowledge of the medical system and expert navigational skills to help find a treatment that can hopefully reduce the severity of some of Eliana's symptoms and give the little girl a better chance at life.

Ms. Telesca and her husband have created a foundation, the KCNC1 Foundation, to help raise money to research cures and treatments for KCNC1-related DEE and other similar genetic disorders.

"I obviously didn't choose to have a child with a disability, but this is what happened," Ms. Telesca says. "As a parent, you're going to do whatever you can to give them a good life."

There is no known cure for KCNC1-related DEE. Combinations of drugs, such as anti-seizure medications, along with physical and occupational therapy, can help with some symptoms. But its rarity means little research has been done on this genetic condition, which has been another source of frustration for Ms. Telesca and her family.

As she and her husband learned, the world of rare diseases is marked by patients who often feel overlooked or abandoned by the medical system. Because of the small number of cases, rare diseases can be difficult to study. And, historically, pharmaceutical companies have had little financial incentive to invest vast sums into rare-disease research, given the chance of a return on investment is relatively small.

But there is a growing network of clinicians and families who are finding novel ways to treat certain rare genetic diseases. Ms. Telesca hopes this avenue will yield results for Eliana. She made contact with Ethan Perlstein, the founder of a biotechnology company in San Francisco that is dedicated to finding treatments for rare diseases like Eliana's. Instead of developing entirely new drugs – a time-consuming and extremely expensive undertaking – the company funds research and clinical trials that use existing drugs to see if they can be repurposed to treat certain genetic conditions.

It's an exciting new pathway for families of children with rare diseases and has become a lifeline for Ms. Telesca, who sees enormous

potential in finding an existing drug and seeing how it can be used to treat the symptoms of KCNC1-related DEE.

The very fact that there's a company solely focused on the mission of helping to find treatments for rare diseases is enough to be excited about, as conditions like Eliana's are often neglected and receive relatively scant attention in the world of scientific research.

"It's really nice and really uplifting to see so many people working together to help children with rare diseases," she says.

Ms. Telesca is focused on helping to fund research into finding a drug that can be repurposed to help treat Eliana's condition. She's heard about cases of other children with disorders in the same family who are seeing some success with repurposed drugs and is hopeful about the possibilities.

While a cure would be a miracle, Ms. Telesca and her husband are steadfastly focused on finding a treatment that can help Eliana gain more control over her body and mind, making it easier for her to navigate through life.

"We just always wanted her to be able to decide how she lives her life. We hope that we find a treatment that allows her more bodily autonomy," Ms. Telesca says.

Of course, it's not easy to gain access to new treatments and experimental therapies. So, that means Ms. Telesca has had to become an expert at navigating the complex global network of researchers, scientists, and pharmaceutical

## WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

Many rare diseases are exceedingly uncommon – one in a million, or even less. Some affect only a few people on the entire planet. There are between 6,000 and 8,000 different rare diseases – estimates vary – and collectively, they affect a lot of people. Many are life-threatening, but even those that aren't can have a major impact on quality of life.

In 2021, Health Canada published a discussion paper, *Building a National Strategy for High-Cost Drugs for Rare Diseases*. It outlines some of the unique challenges that rare diseases present. According to that paper, fewer than 10 per cent of these conditions have any kind of treatment. Recent years have seen an increase in treatments that cost more than \$200,000 per patient, per year. And some treatments can cost 10 times that.

Pharmaceutical companies attribute the large price tags to the high cost of research and development, and the small market size for any one condition. And because of these costs, access to treatments can be patchy. Government and private drug plans won't always pay, and the price is too high for most people to pay out of pocket.

But there are other challenges, too. Roughly 80 per cent of rare diseases are genetic, and it is often possible to diagnose them with pre-natal genetic screening. However, when not caught early, diagnostic errors are more likely. Attending physicians are unlikely to have seen a rare disease's symptoms before, making it much more difficult to successfully diagnose. – Ty Burke





AFTER RECEIVING AND COMING TO TERMS WITH ELIANA'S DIAGNOSIS, [MS. TELESKA] AND HER HUSBAND STARTED TO MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX MEDICAL NEEDS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH RARE DISEASES.

companies who are trying to help patients with rare diseases. She and her husband recently started working with Metrion Biosciences, a company based in the United Kingdom, to look for a possible medication that could be repurposed to help Eliana. Ms. Telesca has connected with universities, researchers, and parents around the world in her quest to help her daughter.

In the process, she has also found something she needed: a community. For months after Eliana was born, Ms. Telesca found herself housebound and unable to complete the basic tasks of daily living, as exhaustion and anxiety took over. After receiving and coming to terms with Eliana's diagnosis, she and her husband started to make connections with other families of children with complex medical needs, including those with rare

diseases. She started taking her daughter to a community centre designed for children with special needs and marvelled at the ability to speak out loud about the struggles she and her husband face with other parents who understand.

"It was my reintroduction into civil society," she says.

And it was in this new community that she also learned to appreciate the limited ways her daughter can communicate and play. For instance, Eliana's therapists frame her frequent bouts of crying as an excellent way of communicating that something is wrong. And they've helped Ms. Telesca see how fussy Eliana gets when her mother is speaking to someone else. They're a small window into Eliana's world and her parents are grateful for them.

To many people in her life, what Ms. Telesca is doing is nothing short of remarkable: juggling full-time

work with caring for her daughter and carving out a space in the world of pharmaceutical biotechnology for an ultra-rare disease. But to her, this is the only option.

"There is no other door for me," she says. "This is how I keep going."

Ms. Telesca can trace her fierce commitment and determination to her time as a student at Queen's. She recalls being surrounded by people who were accomplishing so much and working so hard to better themselves and their communities.

"I think just being around that has fostered ... my motivation to get things done and wanting to see things in a better light," she says. "I think being at Queen's was very integral in shaping the person I am today."

Like any parents, Ms. Telesca and her husband have hopes and dreams for their daughter. It's just that they look a little different than those of her peers. For them, the dream is finding a way to give Eliana the chance to control the movements of her body, experience joy and love, and express her thoughts, wants, and feelings.

"We feel pretty hopeful that we'll find something," she says. "How quickly, we're not sure." 🐾

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# OFF CAMPUS



## First Up

## Janet T. Planet

ENGINEER, DESIGNER,  
INNOVATOR

*Fascinated by the way systems work and interact, and driven to figure out ways to make them better, Janet T. Planet (Sc'98) found success as an innovator in part because she never really left the factory floor. After co-founding Los Angeles-based The Fluent Group, she trained her novel thinking on helping businesses put all the parts in place to turn innovative ideas into reality.*

**When I was** studying mechanical engineering at Queen's, I worked as an intern at the Leaf Confections factory in Scarborough, Ont., which produced those traditional, brightly coloured gumballs. This fed my already well-developed fascination with the way different things fit together and my interest in thinking about systems of things, whether it's ingredients, manufacturing processes, business, or the players within a business ecosystem.

Gumballs may seem pretty simple, but it's actually a highly complex process to produce them, with many phases. Every day that I worked at Leaf, I made a point of going up on a balcony that looked down over this one area in the factory (about the size of a football field) where they kept thousands of trays of different coloured gumballs, so I could take in the beauty of this enormous rainbow of millions of shiny spheres. It was just like magic.

One thing that became apparent to me was the small number →

→ of women both in mechanical engineering at Queen's and on the factory floor. That served as a good training ground because, even today, I'll be the only woman again and again in business meetings. It's an absolutely wild experience, but you learn how to navigate that and understand who your allies are.

After graduating from Queen's, I went to design school in London, England, and showed at Toronto Fashion Week five times, but then decided fashion wasn't for me. It's one of those industries where you think it's going to be really glamorous, but then it just isn't. In contrast, being in business and dreaming up products and experiences is actually quite sexy work.

At Fluent, my factory floor and engineering roots influence my approach to business. They remind me of how businesses are made of interconnected parts and that we can create wins for all parts of the business ecosystem if we consider all the connection points.

One of the things I'm most proud of in my career is the way I translated the engineering piece into experience design. I worked on designing an experience for 2,700 passengers over the span of five to seven days with Richard Branson's founding team at Virgin Voyages (winner of Cruise Critic's 2022 Best Cruise Line). I saw the meaningful movement of people through experiences on the ship very much like the components of a machine and started drawing it that way. Others would see my whiteboards and ask, "what is that?" and I'd explain it was people moving through an emotional arc of magical experiences, connecting them with other like-minded people.

It was baffling to them, and they often asked me how I learned to do experience design like that. I'd say: "Well, I studied mechanical engineering." And it's funny because Queen's calls engineering "applied science," which I always loved, because it is about learning a principle and then applying it everywhere. And, ultimately, my career has effectively been just that.

— As told to Jeff Pappone

►  
Author and  
Queen's fellow  
Edward Struzik

## THE BACKSTORY



### Fuel to the fire

Queen's fellow Edward Struzik explores the history of wildfire and what we can learn from it

**I**n the summer of 2004, Edward Struzik was hiking along the Lockhart River in the Northwest Territories when a thick, black cloud of smoke from a nearby wildfire encircled him. He could hardly breathe, let alone see, and he didn't know which way to turn. He took a guess and started backtracking as fast as he could. It was a good guess. The dark cloud eventually disappeared and the fire never reached him.

"That really was a wake-up call," says Mr. Struzik, now a fellow at Queen's Institute for Energy and Environmental Policy. "It was my first direct confrontation with a fire, and it made me realize what so many people in boreal communities across Canada go through when a fire comes in very, very quickly."

That blaze was also one of a series of rallying calls for the veteran science and environmental journalist to learn more about wildfires. The summer before, he had been up in a helicopter overlooking Kootenay National Park's "Holy Shit Fire," named after the exclamations of bureaucrats who saw the

PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMBER BRÄCKEN

## New content from faculty and alumni



massive inferno rip through the valley below. A Parks Canada wild-fire manager told Mr. Struzik that, as the planet continued to warm, these flames were a premonition of bigger fires to come. “That stuck with me,” he remembers. “And I realized that as the years went by, we just saw more fires burning bigger, hotter, more often, and causing more damage.”

All of this led to *Dark Days at Noon: The Future of Fire*, Mr. Struzik’s 2022 book about what the history of wildfires in North America might teach us about dealing with wildfires of the future.

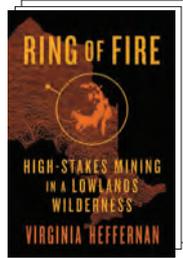
Through archive sifting and first-hand reporting, he details dozens of the continent’s most infamous fires and the response to them. There’s the 1825 Great Miramichi Fire, for instance, one of the largest and most deadly wildfires in North American history. There’s the 1950 Chinchaga Firestorm in northern Alberta, whose smoke turned day into night in parts of Ontario. And, of course, there’s the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire, which could have been a lot worse were it not for a young, emergency-trained populace and a last-minute change in weather.

Mr. Struzik’s conclusion from his historical survey: the old tactics of fire suppression won’t work. We must learn to live with fire, as the continent’s Indigenous Peoples once did. Investing in fire science has to be a priority; investing in communities to be more resilient and able to manage fire should be another.

Small signs of progress are showing, but not quick enough, he says. As he has seen up close, wildfires are burning hotter and faster – and they aren’t waiting for us to catch up.

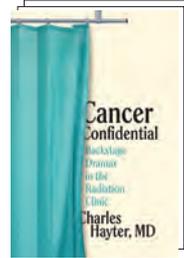
“Fire has nothing to say except for the fact of itself,” he writes. “It will always be quite simply a chemical reaction, a propulsive oxidation of hydrocarbons shaped by terrain, weather, climate, and the combustible material around it. We have to learn to live with fire and find ways of containing it. Fire will not learn to live with us.”

– Jordan Whitehouse



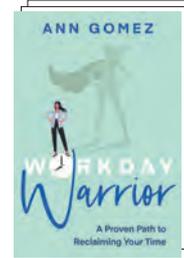
01

The 2007 discovery of valuable metal deposits in the James Bay Lowlands placed the local Indigenous community at odds with an American mining company. **Virginia Heffernan, Artsci’86**, documents the battle in *Ring of Fire: High-Stakes Mining in a Lowlands Wilderness*, a fast-paced, thoroughly researched, and ultimately hopeful account of a complex conflict between corporate interests and Indigenous rights. *Ring of Fire* is now available through ECW Press.



02

Not long after launching his career as a radiation oncologist, **Dr. Charles Hayter, Artsci’74, Meds’84**, learned that his father had developed cancer. Dr. Hayter weaves the story of his father’s illness with stories from other patients in *Cancer Confidential: Backstage Dramas in the Radiation Clinic*, released last fall by University of Toronto Press. At a time when one in three cancer patients receives radiation treatment, Dr. Hayter draws on his experience as a historian and playwright to shed light on this well-known but often misunderstood therapy.



03

Even as **Ann Gomez, MBA’00**, was forging a successful career as a management consultant, she couldn’t help feeling overwhelmed as her demanding work life interfered regularly with her personal life. Rather than give in to the pressure, Ms. Gomez dedicated herself to researching productivity and sharing what she’s learned with her clients. In *Workday Warrior*, recently released by Dundurn Press, she shares a three-step strategy – complete with supporting tools – to help you simplify your work and reclaim your time.



04

What do you do after your tenure in one of Canada’s most beloved rock bands is cut short? **Gord Sinclair, Artsci’86**, perhaps better known as the Tragically Hip’s bassist, had to wrestle with that question after frontman Gord Downie’s widely mourned passing in 2017. Fortunately, Mr. Sinclair has sated fans’ appetites in the following years, releasing his debut solo album, *Taxi Dancers*, in 2020, and his second effort, *In Continental Drift*, last month. Preceded by its sonically diverse singles “Gool Guy” and “Sometimes,” *In Continental Drift* is material proof that the spirit of rock lives on.





166  
UNIVERSITY  
AVENUE

**BUILDING**  
Two-storey plus attic, brick, built circa 1895, possibly designed by Arthur Ellis.

**STYLE**  
Late Victorian with brick and wooden detailing, scrolled consoles supporting a frieze with cherub's head under attic windows.

## A house on the move – and a tub for two

BY TONY ATHERTON

Brian Sterling (Sc'74) returned to Queen's for a reunion recently. Sitting in his car outside the Donald Gordon Centre waiting for a friend, he glanced up from his phone and spotted the handsome Victorian brick home he had shared with friends during his last two years at the university.

He was surprised. The house was two kilometres from where he left it more than 45 years earlier.

It had been 166 University Avenue back then. Now it's 451 Union Street.

"I knew it had been moved," Mr. Sterling says, "but I didn't know where."

The transplantation of three houses – 162, 166, and 168 University – was big news in the summer of 1992. That August, the homes had been jacked up, placed on flatbed trucks, and taken up Princess Street and down Sir John A. Macdonald Boulevard to their new resting place. The university had been clearing land for the construction of Stauffer Library and the three homes, built around 1895, were deemed too grand to be razed.

When Brian Sterling moved, with five others, into the top two floors of the home in the fall of 1973, he was impressed by the carved banisters, the high baseboards, and the woodwork. (Also, the big claw-foot bathtub

## Interconnected actions



There are so many ways you can help shape the Queen's experience

**In April, Queen's** celebrated National Volunteer Week 2023, with the theme of "Volunteering Weaves Us Together." This theme highlighted the importance of volunteering to strengthen our communities through the interconnected actions we take to support one another. As I reflected on what this means for the Queen's alumni community, I couldn't help but notice that our interconnected actions are what make our community so vibrant and meaningful.

With the reality of numerous competing demands on our time, the gift of an individual's time to volunteer for Queen's is significant and invaluable to the alumni community. Queen's is fortunate to have more than 4,600 alumni volunteers, who help ensure our alumni remain connected through branches, chapters, faculty associations, reunions, and more. We have volunteers with the Queen's University Alumni Association (QUAA) Board, the Board of Trustees, and University Council, who all provide expertise to support the advancement of the university and the engagement of its alumni. This volunteering benefits us all, and the interconnectedness has helped shape the "Queen's experience."

Of course, not everyone has the capacity to donate their time, which is why there are other actions you can take to support your alma mater. This includes nominating exceptional alumni for honorary degrees and QUAA Awards. In June 2023, we'll have the chance to honour a fresh slate of QUAA Award winners for their distinguished achievements, volunteerism with their communities, and support for advancing issues related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigeneity. It is a phenomenal group of award winners, who are an inspiration for the entire alumni community.

Finally, there is the gift of financial donations to the university, which help ensure the student experience at Queen's continues to be a defining feature of the institution's success. This includes the option to direct your giving to causes of importance to you. Personally, I direct my giving to the Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre, which provides support for Indigenous students. I was inspired by the recommendations from the Queen's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Task Force Final Report and wanted to do my part.

So, whether it is through time, talent, treasure, or other means, I encourage you all to find ways to contribute to help Queen's flourish in the decades ahead.

Sincerely,  
COLIN MCLEOD,  
PRESIDENT, QUAA

in the second-floor bathroom. Mr. Sterling remembers that "occasionally, someone might have a friend join them.")

Mr. Sterling had been living with three friends in a William Street home the previous year, but one of his roommates was leaving. Meanwhile, 166 University was undergoing renovations to change from a triplex to a duplex – a married-students' apartment on the main floor and a six-bedroom unit on the two upper floors. The attic had been occupied by three women the previous year, and they needed the guys to move in so they could keep their rooms, Mr. Sterling says.

But it wasn't that simple, says Kerry Clark (Com'74), one of Mr. Sterling's roommates from William Street. He remembers 166 University being part of the Queen's Community Housing pool, and says the six prospective tenants had to win a lottery to get a lease. In the end, it all went smoothly, Mr. Clark says.

He credits Mr. Sterling for much of the home's success. "He's got great organizing skills."

Mr. Sterling doesn't recall things quite that way, but admits he's been told that before. He was the only roommate with a car, he says, and he liked shopping the grocery-store flyers Saturday mornings. Each roomie chipped in 10 bucks a week for groceries, and it was more than enough, he says.

"We all ate really well," he says. "Sixty dollars a week, that was a fair amount of money for groceries then."

The second floor had a kitchen and dining room with a large wooden table in front of the big bay window. "You'd sit there having coffee in the morning watching people going back and forth and waving," Mr. Sterling says.

Among those routinely passing was next-door neighbour Ralph Clench, the beloved and eccentric calculus teacher who would stride by in his oversized coat with his two transistor radios slung around his neck. Visitors to 166 University were invariably charmed by a Clench sighting. "It was like living next door to Ryan Reynolds," says Mr. Sterling.

The home's location was a large part of its attraction, the roommates agree. It was across the street from the John Deutsch University Centre and just inside the northern boundary of the main campus. But 166 University also had style; they can see why it was preserved.

"I liked the location, but I also felt it looked great," says Mr. Clark. "I felt very proud to be living there." 🏠

▲  
[Tell us about the University District house you lived in and the memories you made: review@queensu.ca](mailto:review@queensu.ca)

# Holding the line

Derek Wiggan's leadership style earns him top honours from the Calgary Stampeders

BY JEFF PAPPONE

**A**s an elite athlete who is just 30, Canadian Football League defensive star Derek Wiggan (Artsci'14) feels pretty comfortable being seen as the “old guy” on teams.

The Calgary Stampeders defensive end first found himself in that role in 2014 at the ripe old age of 22, when the team sent him back to the Queen's Golden Gaels for another year of college ball after attending training camp. He returned to Kingston to find a young team looking to him for guidance.

“I guess that was the first time I really saw myself as a leader,” says Mr. Wiggan, who has battled in the defensive-line trenches for seven seasons since joining the team for good in 2015.

“Coming back to Queen's for my fifth year, we had a lot of freshmen, and I was the older guy who just did a CFL camp. I'd been through it, I'd been through ups and downs, and I'd experienced it all from a university sense, and I figured I could just give myself to the guys on the team and the leadership part grew from there.”

Having that 2014 experience at Queen's served Mr. Wiggan well when the Stampeders began rebuilding after a 2018 Grey Cup triumph. The team saw several key players leave after that championship season and the Toronto native once again found himself as the old guy in a sea of fresh faces.

“My leadership role grew with the Stampeders after the 2018 breakup, when I was one of a couple of holdovers,” he says.

“My personality is that I think more about team success than my own, because I know that if the team succeeds, I succeed as well. I get joy from doing a good job and I think

younger guys, whether professional or collegiate players, see my approach and think, ‘Hey, this guy's willing to do his job and it's not the most glamorous job’ and then maybe they think, ‘Why can't I do that, too?’”

Last October, Mr. Wiggan saw his leadership recognized through the 2022 Calgary Stampeders' Presidents' Ring Award, given for excellence on and off the field. Decided by a player vote, it recognizes “in-game contributions, leadership, inspiration, and motivational skills.”

His ability to go above and beyond was also recognized in 2019 when he earned the Stampeders' nomination for the Jake Gaudaur Veterans' Award. The award goes to a Canadian player who demonstrates strength, perseverance, courage, comradeship, and contribution to Canadian communities.

In addition to leading on the field, Mr. Wiggan took on an extra role last year as a CFL Players' Association representative. He hopes to help guide his fellow players, especially the younger ones, and ensure they understand the services and resources available, as well as offer advice if needed.

“I've been with the Stampeders since 2015, so I've seen lots of things on and off the field and I just see myself like a resource for guys to use if they need help – I'm kind of like a tour guide,” he says.

“I think I've built a cache of knowledge as a guy who's been there and done that. It was the same thing when I was at Queen's.”

Part of his new association duties saw him participate in the 2022 Grey Cup in November, but not as a player. While he found it “weird” going to the game without his equipment, the experience showed him that sometimes the “old guy” can also see things like a wide-eyed youngster.

“When I was playing in the game, I didn't have to think about anything else – we had our mandatory media day, but otherwise we were just focused on the game,” he says.

“Last year, I was doing players' association events, some community service, some media stuff, some fan engagement, and I thought to myself, ‘Oh, there's so much going on around the game and it's pretty cool.’” 🍷



## AT A GLANCE

- ▶ height: 6'1"
- ▶ weight: 306 lbs.
- ▶ age: 30
- ▶ played for St. Michael's College School in high school
- ▶ won the Greater Toronto Area football championship in the 2008 Metro Bowl
- ▶ played five seasons at Queen's
- ▶ was a first team all-star 2013 and a second team all-star 2014
- ▶ was drafted 34th overall by the Calgary Stampeders in 2014
- ▶ played all 110 games of his professional career with the same team
- ▶ was Calgary's nominee for Most Outstanding Canadian in 2021
- ▶ returned to Queen's in 2014 and took several business courses that led to him becoming an insurance broker in the off-season

# CLASS NOTES



## WRITE TO US

If you have memories of friends, faculty, and colleagues you would like to share, email us: [review@queensu.ca](mailto:review@queensu.ca).

All comments may be edited for clarity, civility, and length.



[@queensureview](https://twitter.com/queensureview)



## 1950s

### John Devai

Sc'56

John Devai celebrated his 90th birthday this year on March 7. John proudly graduated from the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science in 1956. Upon graduation, he and his wife, Irene, moved to Oakville, Ont., where they raised two children, John Jr. and Susan. John and Irene were married for 63 years. Irene sadly passed away in 2018. John had a successful engineering career, which included senior positions at Petro-Canada and Sunoco, as well as consulting internationally. He has three granddaughters and three great-grandsons.

▲ An archival photo from the turn of the century shows a couple admiring the avenue of chestnut trees at Herstmonceux Castle. The trees were likely planted around 1700.

## 1960s

### John Armstrong

Arts'64, MBA'66

John Armstrong is pleased to share the news that his granddaughter, Madelaine Armstrong (NSc'26), is the fourth generation of her family to attend Queen's. Maddie follows in the footsteps of her great-grandparents Malcolm Armstrong (BA'29) and Elizabeth Murdie Armstrong (BA'30); great-uncles William Armstrong (BA'54, MA'55) and James Armstrong (Sc'58); and cousins Steven Armstrong (Artsci'83) and Kenneth Armstrong (MSc'96).

### Barry Wellar

Arts'65

In recognition of 35 years of



practise as a full member and qualifications as a Registered Professional Planner (RPP) in good standing, Dr. Barry Wellar received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ontario Professional Planners Institute at its 2022 joint conference with the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects.

## 1970s

### Sheelagh Anne Barrable

Arts'72

Sheelagh Anne Barrable, who lives in Bermuda and is a tireless advocate for the island's children and vulnerable families, was appointed as an officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British



Empire in January 2023. In 1992, Sheelagh was the founder of the Coalition for the Protection of Children, serving as chair of the charity for 27 years. In collaboration with the Women's Resource Centre, she also helped bring the Transformational Living Centre to completion in 2021. The centre provides safe shelter for women and their children, along with support in education, life skills, and employment.

### Melodie Campbell

Com'78

Melodie Campbell has been invited by the Toronto International Festival of Authors to share the spotlight at MOTIVE Crime & Mystery Festival, June 2-4, 2023, presented by Kobo Plus. The events coincide with the publication of her 17th novel, *The Merry Widow Murders*, from Cormorant Books. Melodie has won 10 awards for crime fiction, including the Crime Writers of Canada Award of Excellence. She is married to Michael O'Connell (Com'78).

## 1980s

### Colin Gardiner

Artsci'88

As a student from 1984–1988, Colin Gardiner dreamed of getting

▲ John Armstrong and his granddaughter, Madelaine.

into the music industry. He spent countless hours playing the pianos in Harrison-LeCaine Hall and performed at virtually every campus venue. As a member of Queen's Players, he also appeared at Clark Hall Pub. While hosting a weekly show on CFRC, he would occasionally slip in demos of his own songs. Upon graduation, he got sidetracked by an exceedingly fun job as a flight attendant with Air Canada, which diverted his focus. Now, after three and a half decades, he has finally released his debut album. It was produced and mixed by his wizard of a son, Max, who has been accepted to attend Queen's this fall (Artsci'27). Colin's album is called *Zero to Sixty*, by Gard-Dog (his nickname), and can be found on most streaming platforms.

### Sue Lantz

Artsci'81, MPA'94

Sue Lantz, managing director of Collaborative Aging, released a practical guide to healthy aging in place in the fall of 2020. Her guide, *Options Open: The Guide for Mapping Your Best Aging Journey*, takes a "travel planning" approach to aging, broadening one's thinking to creatively plan for the future. This guide, along with its accompanying workshops or community conversations, offers positive and informed navigation about how people can proactively use their 60s and 70s to arrange for their 80s and 90s. Published by I C Publishing, *Options Open* is also available on the iBookstore and Amazon. Since graduating from Queen's, Sue has become a trusted policy expert and voice for older adults and caregivers, and she serves on the boards of 8 80 Cities and the Toronto Seniors Strategy 2.0 table. She also advises groups that are expanding innovative housing and community initiatives, such as Canada HomeShare. Sue previously served as a founding member of Toronto Metropolitan University's National Institute on Aging, a policy think

tank in Canada, as well as the Technical Advisory Committee on Accessibility for Canadian Standards Association.

**Andy Wang**

Rehab'83

Dr. Andy Wang was the recipient of a Leadership and Advocacy award from the Ontario Physiotherapy Association during its annual gala in March 2023. He is a registered physiotherapist and acupuncturist, a fellow of the Canadian Academy of Manipulative Physiotherapy, and an orthopaedic instructor for the Ontario Orthopaedic Division of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association. The award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to the profession by increasing the awareness and value of physiotherapy to the public and/or health-care community, and who has been a shining example of a leader within the profession and health-care environment.

# 1990s

**Andrew Brown**

Artsci'94

Andrew Brown was appointed Associate Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Development, effective Feb. 13, 2023, as part of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's changes to the senior ranks of the Public Service. He is the first Black male to be appointed to such a position.

**Edward Chadderton**

Law'96

Edward "Ted" J. Chadderton accepted an invitation in December 2022 to join the International Association of Defense Counsel, the pre-eminent invitation-only global legal organization for attorneys who represent corporate



◀ Newlyweds Jenna Dibblee and Connor Peebles on the steps of Douglas Library.



▼ Ashley Drobot and Haykaz Mangardich are engaged to be married.

and insurance interests. Upon receiving the invitation, he said, "As a member of the International Association of Defense Counsel, I am grateful for the opportunity to belong to and participate in a tribe of civil defence attorneys of the highest calibre, and benefit from sharing knowledge and experiences with the depth and breadth not possible elsewhere." Edward is a managing partner at Carroll Heyd Chown LLP in Barrie, Ont., the past president of the Simcoe County Law Association, and past vice-chair of the Library Co. Board of Directors, which operated the province of Ontario's network of county law libraries.



**Sarah Nicholl**

Artsci'93

Since graduating, Sarah Nicholl has focused her career on extending the reach of learning with technology. Having consulted with more than 200 organizations across the F1000 globally, Sarah is sharing the

habits that she sees across teams, individuals, and organizations that make for more innovation and increased capabilities. Kogan Page is publishing her new book, *Learning Habits: Drive a Learning Culture to Improve Employee and Business Performance*, which is available as of April 2023. She invites people to visit her website: [yoursuccesspartnernow.com](http://yoursuccesspartnernow.com).

**Julie Smith**

ConEd'97

Julie Smith has been teaching in Michigan for the last 13 years. At Greenhills School, where she currently teaches, the school recently had its first student ever accept an offer to go to Queen's! When she heard the news, she contacted her niece, Katie Urchik (Com'25), and had her run to the Campus Bookstore to get the prospective Queen's student a T-shirt. Graeme Jagger is very excited to become a student of the class of 2027!

# 2010s

**Jenna Dibblee and Connor Peebles**

Artsci'15, Sc'15

Jenna Dibblee and Connor Peebles eloped on the back staircase of Douglas Library on a frigid Jan. 14, 2022. Later they celebrated with their families at a cottage wedding on Lake of Bays, Ont. Jenna and Connor met in their fourth year at Queen's. Proud fellow Queen's alumni include parents Tom Dibblee (Ed'87) and Sharon Kehoe (Dibblee) (Artsci/PHE'84), and grandfather A.C. Dibblee (a.k.a. Dibb) (Arts'53).

**Ashley Drobot**

MPH'15

Ashley Drobot is engaged! She met her fiancé, Haykaz Mangardich (MSc'15, PhD'21), at Queen's in September 2013 at a grad boat

cruise event. They became engaged this past October. Haykaz proposed to her in Jasper, Alta., at a spot on one of their favourite hiking trails. She was completely surprised and, later, had a lovely time during the proposal shoot. It just so happened that she was wearing her favourite Queen's sweatshirt.

**Lauren Peddle (Inouye) and Andrew Inouye**

Artsci'10, Artsci'10  
Lauren Peddle (Inouye) and Andrew Inouye welcomed their daughter and future Queen's student Peyton in November 2022. She is pictured with a blanket gifted by fellow Queen's alumni Ashleigh Reeve (Artsci'08) and Kevin MacLeod (Artsci'09).

**Taylor Reynolds and Renee Hansuld**

Sc'16, Sc'16  
Taylor Reynolds and Renee Hansuld were married in Mississauga, Ont., on June 4, 2022. Pictured below is the Queen's contingent of current and past years, including the groom's parents, James Reynolds



◀ Future Queen's student Peyton Inouye.



◀ Newlyweds Taylor Reynolds and Renee Hansuld.

(Artsci'82, PhD'87) and Susan Reynolds (Moore) (Artsci'86), who also met during their time at Queen's, along with a large group from the Queen's men's soccer team. Taylor and Renee are living and working in Seattle.

**Emily Ritson and Jack Shannon**

Artsci'17, Artsci'17  
Emily Ritson and Jack Shannon were married in the village of Killarney, Ont., on Oct. 8, 2022. The weather was cool, but the fall colours were at their peak, and it was a beautiful place to be with friends and family. As many guests were alumni, a photo was taken of the Queen's contingent, and Emily and Jack's proud papas (middle, front) Henry Ritson (Artsci'85) and John Shannon (Artsci'85) managed to sneak in front of the newlyweds just in time.

## IN MEMORIAM

**James Michael Bennett**  
BSc'63

**Arnold Arthur Bowers**  
M.Ed.'74

**Carl Bresee**  
BA'71, B.Ed.'72

**Gerald (Gerry) Robert Browning**  
BSc'56

**George R. Cheeseman**  
B.Sc'52

**Donald J. Daly**  
BCom'43, BA'46, MA'48

**Diane (Hodgston) Dodd**  
BA'68

**Benjamin "Big Ben" Doliszny**  
Golden Gael

**Walter Edward Downes**  
BA'56

**Mary R. Doyle**  
BA'84

**Robert (Bob) Alva Eveleigh**  
BSc'58

**Christopher George Gray**  
BSc'61

**David Hinson Hill**  
BA'62, LLB'65

**Helen Howard**  
BA'48

**William (Bill) Kipkie**  
BSc'66, PhD'70

**Katrina Latawiec**  
BCom'20, BA'20

**John A. Maguire**  
BASc'54

**William "Bill" Gerald McGaughey**  
BSc'52

**David Millward**  
BA'62

**Ronald Pettit**  
BSc'57

**Judith Anne Rodgers Prior**  
BA'61

**Joan Rombough (McCrary)**  
BA'75

**Herbert Francis "Gus" Shurvell**  
Emeritus Professor of Chemistry  
Former Adjunct Professor in the Art Conservation Program

**Robert Kerr Swartman**  
BSc'53, MSc'60

**Francis Kenney Tindall**  
BA'64, Meds'68

**Michael B. Vladescu**  
MBA'20

**Jeffrey George (Jeff) Witt**  
BSc'85

**Editor's Note:** Full obituaries submitted by family members and friends can be found on the Queen's Alumni Review website.

# LEGACY

1922-2022

## Elizabeth 'Betty' Musson Kawaley

Alumna Tka Pinnock discovers the long path that Elizabeth paved for Black students at Queen's

**U**nder the cover of night, her ship cut through the waves in darkness to avoid the enemy. It was 1939 and the Atlantic Ocean was no place for passenger vessels. Her trip had already been cancelled twice before but, as she cast her gaze toward starlit northern skies, she must have hoped that the third time would be the charm. This was it. She was finally leaving the warmth of Bermuda for the cold and uncertainty of Canada. But it was her dream.

Bags packed and hair straightened for a third time ("It was what you did in those days if you were going somewhere special," she later recalled), 17-year-old Elizabeth bid goodbye to her family. War was in its infancy, she didn't know a soul in Canada, and she had no inkling of when she would be able to return home. But she was undeterred. Armed with only the exuberance of youth, she sailed into her future. Queen's University was waiting.

**Elizabeth arrived at** Queen's in the fall of 1939 to discover she was "the only Black girl on campus," as one Bermuda news website recalled on her 100th birthday.

Whether she was or not, it is safe to say Elizabeth believed this to be the case, and with good reason.

"I was the only 'Coloured' student at the school – and I knew of only one other Coloured family in Kingston, Ontario, itself," she told Bermuda's *Royal Gazette* last year.



People, she said, would "point and whisper in astonishment" and some were curious enough about her that they even wanted, much to Elizabeth's surprise, to touch her skin.

"Some people in Kingston were appalled to see me," she recalled in a 2018 interview. "They'd never seen a Black person before."

But her three roommates – she called them her sisters – would link arms with her and say, "Come along." These allies – Anna (Kleinstauber) Wheal, Elnora (McCalpin) Sheppard and Ruth Cordy – were a balm to her soul. They ate in the cafeteria together, and she stayed with their families during school holidays. The sisterhood held strong – long after graduation and Elizabeth's return home to Bermuda.

**I would arrive** at Queen's 64 years later, in September 2003. Much

like it was for Elizabeth, Queen's and Kingston were unknown to me, having only migrated to Canada the year prior. And while I did not find Queen's or Kingston to be particularly inhospitable, our experiences were perhaps not markedly different.

People may not have been appalled to see me in 2003, but it's fair to say they were probably surprised a few times. I was not the only Black girl on campus. But I was, more often than not, the only Black person in each of my classes. Year after year.

In fact, in my entire time at Queen's, there were only three times when I had a Black classmate. I was never taught by a Black faculty member.

Luckily, I found community. I was active in the African Caribbean Students' Association and in the Alma Mater Society and, briefly, in the Arts & Science Undergraduate

▲ Elizabeth forged strong friendships with her roommates and allies – she called them her sisters.



Society (ASUS). Still, I struggled with my sense of belonging at Queen's. I shared my struggles with Dr. Barrington Walker, a history professor who encouraged me to take ownership of the space, and to see Queen's as mine just as much as anyone else's. His advice would forever change my relationship to the university – it is the reason I continue to be an engaged alumna.

But knowing about Elizabeth Musson would have helped. More than six decades before me, Elizabeth not only saw Queen's as her own, she made Queen's her own. And she made a path for me, too.

I think most alumni know the story of Robert Sutherland, BA 1852. He was the first Black student at Queen's and went on to become Canada's first Black lawyer. He is credited with saving the university, which was in dire financial straits in the 1870s, by bequeathing his estate

to the school – which was also in danger of being annexed by the University of Toronto. Sutherland's gift saved Queen's, and his remarkable story had returned to our collective imagination following the advocacy work of Greg Frankson, the first Black president of the Alma Mater Society. At a time when we were reckoning with the institution's "culture of whiteness," Elizabeth's story would have been an important reminder for us all – and a personal affirmation for me – that Black people have always been here.

That Black women have been here.

And that our role in Queen's story is not just that of saviour or mascot.

We are ordinary students who, through our time at Queen's, are forged into exceptional beings. Some of us, like Elizabeth, are the unexceptional exceptional.

This is her story.

**Elizabeth "Betty" Musson, Arts'43**, was born on Long Bird Island in St. David's, Bermuda, on April 23, 1922, the second of seven children. A brilliant student, she won a secondary school scholarship to attend The Berkeley Institute, and then later, the first Bermuda Government Scholarship for Girls – a groundbreaking scholarship open to the girl with the highest exam score, regardless of race – to attend

▼  
Elizabeth recalled that people used to point and whisper when they saw her. "They'd never seen a Black person before," she said.



university. She achieved all this at a time when young Black women in Bermuda were lucky to attend high school, and women attending university were still uncommon. She chose Queen's and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Arts in 1943, later moving to England to study for a diploma in education at London University, followed by a year studying French in Paris.

She returned to Bermuda in the mid-1940s to become a teacher, teaching French at The Berkeley Institute, Sandys Secondary School, and Warwick Secondary School. She was so fondly remembered and highly regarded by her students that Queen's alumna Judith Brown, Arts'69, regaled me with stories of being taught by her. After retiring from teaching in 1981, she began a second career as an author, publishing *The Island that Disappeared* in 1995 with a second edition in 2013.

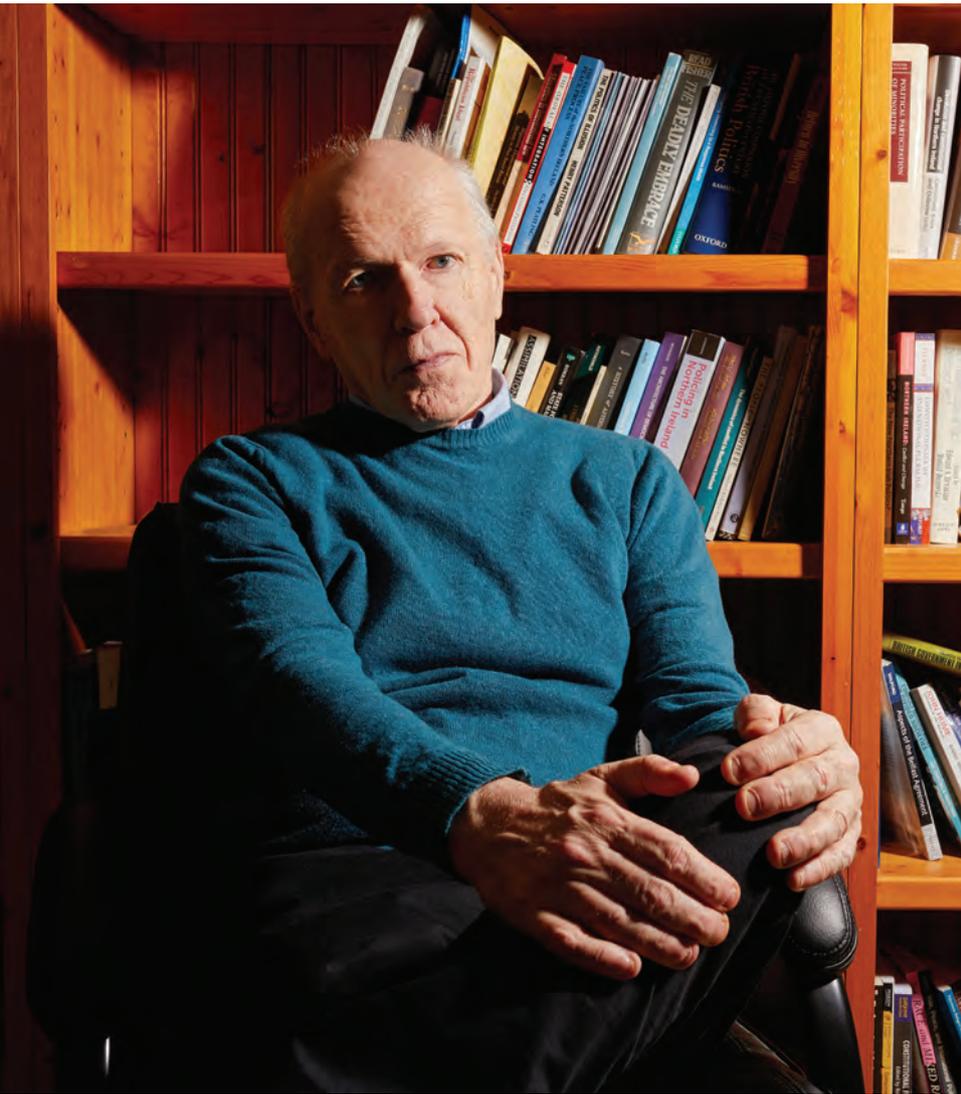
In true Queen's spirit, Elizabeth was an activist. She served as president of the Bermuda Union of Teachers from 1948-1949 and, even after retiring, continued to support the union. In the 1950s, she was actively engaged in the Theatre Boycott to desegregate local theatres in Bermuda.

Marrying later than typical of her generation, she had a 61-year marriage to Solomon Kawaley, a fellow teacher originally from Sierra Leone. The couple married on Easter Sunday, April 13, 1952, and had three children – Ian, Kathy and Sylvia. In 1986, Betty was thrilled to take Sylvia to begin her first year at Queen's. Sylvia graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Honours in Film Studies in 1989. Betty's granddaughter, Katrina Kawaley, would follow in her footsteps, graduating from Queen's in 2005.

Betty Kawaley died on May 29, 2022. The story goes that even at 100 years old, she still sang the Oil Thigh. She was a true Gael.

Let's remember her: A bold and courageous teenager whose quiet determination and big dreams had an impact on her family, her country, and Queen's. 👑

– Tka Pinnock, Artsci'07



## Charting a course for peace

Dr. John McGarry awarded Pearson Peace Medal

BY JORDAN WHITEHOUSE

Winning awards is nothing new for Queen's Political Studies Professor John McGarry, but when the renowned expert in conflict resolution got the call that he had won the 2022 Pearson Peace Medal, his jaw almost hit the floor.

The medal is one of the highest honours in this country. Given out every year by the United Nations Association in Canada, it recognizes Canadians who have made significant contributions to peace and

prosperity around the world. Past recipients have included former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Beverley McLachlin and Lt.-Gen. Roméo Dallaire.

"To be mentioned in the same breath as some of these people is stupefying," says Dr. McGarry. "I feel like a bit of an impostor."

Yet if you just scan Dr. McGarry's CV, you might think otherwise. The native of Northern Ireland is widely recognized as one of the world's leading specialists on power-sharing, and he was appointed the UN's first Senior Adviser on Power-Sharing in 2008. He also spent more than a decade as the lead adviser on power-sharing and governance in the UN-backed negotiations in Cyprus, and has been part of peace processes in Bolivia, Moldova, Iraq, and elsewhere. He was even involved in informal backchannel talks on Ukraine before Russia's invasion last year.

Dr. McGarry's interest in conflict started early. He grew up seeing the origins of the troubles in Northern Ireland first-hand as a Catholic living in the largely Protestant town of Ballymena. "I knew people who were killed and I myself walked past a car that blew up a few minutes later," he remembers. "It all led to a need to inquire into what was causing this."

It also led to the work he is most proud of. In the 1990s, he co-wrote three books seen as influential in the making of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (which sought to end conflict in Northern Ireland), and that also informed the achievement of representative policing in Northern Ireland.

Today, Dr. McGarry is keeping a close eye on Ukraine, and says he would be happy to be part of any peace process when the time comes. He believes that while Russia has no right to annex Ukrainian territory, the time will likely come when both sides want a negotiated settlement. "If either of them prefers fighting and is able to keep fighting, then we don't get a deal."

In the meantime, Dr. McGarry is focusing on what he always has: combining academics and practice. "I always like to say that it is possible to mix academic research with practice. And it's possible to bring practice to bear on teaching as well – students are fascinated to hear this stuff." 🙌



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